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I.

THE WOMAN QUESTION.

THE nineteenth century will be the riddle of history. With its universal activity and universal restlessness, currents and counter-currents, progress and reaction ; now assailing old faiths, and now patching their venerable battlements to make itself a den there ; now proclaiming the religion of science, now prone before the Vatican, and now groveling in prehistoric superstition ; attacking the foundations of modern society ; denouncing mediævalism and borrowing its rusty tools to build a new order of things—this nineteenth century, among its heterogeneous progeny has brought one to light that the world has not seen for many a day. The demand that women shall take an active part in politics is not quite new. That marvelous people of antiquity, the richness of whose political experience matched the power and splendor of their intellectual and æsthetic achievement, were not strangers to this supposed product of modern democracy. It appeared at Athens in the time of Aristophanes, who mocks it with not over-delicate satire. Much has been talked and written about it ; yet we beg to add a few words more. It involves the whole question of the relations of men and women.

One would think that the subject to which men have given their chief attention since the world began would by this time be tolera-

bly well understood, and that little doubt would remain as to the nature, capacities, and position of women. Varieties of race, modes of life, degrees of barbarism or civilization, have modified their relations to the other sex and changed the estimate set upon them. But, while shading and coloring differ, the outlines remain the same, answering in the human race to those that rudely but plainly mark the relations of sex through all the orders of animated nature. Nevertheless, when one sees the vast changes for the better which have already taken place in the position of women, it is impossible not to hope that the future has still others in store. In what direction are we to look for them, and through what influences? These are questions on which those who have at heart the welfare of women, in other words of all humanity, have differed and will no doubt continue for a long time to differ. Let us hope that, in discussing them, the airs of benign mastery which naturally annoy women will be avoided on one side, and postures of antagonism on both. The two sexes are one, and their interests are the same.

The order of Nature is marked by a prevailing consistency. Over all her great fields of action, she is at one with herself, though irregularities and contradictions appear in special cases. Individual men and women are often inharmonious in physical or mental structure, but it is not so with men as a whole, or women as a whole. The typical man or woman is perfectly self-consistent. The one is made for conflict—whether the physical conflict of actual war, or that sometimes no less bitter and cruel, of the competitions of business and ambition. His greater stature and firmer muscles are matched with a sterner spirit, less tender sensibilities, and susceptible nerves, a ruder hardihood, and, in nearly all strongly masculine natures, with a certain remnant of primitive ferocity, which lies latent in the bosom of the highest civilizations and impels their male offspring to adventures of war, the chase, and travel in savage and perilous lands. In short, this fighting animal is well appointed for his work, whether to confront his enemy in deadly strife, or to battle in the interest of a purpose or an idea against cold, hunger, fatigue, want, obloquy, or hope deferred. And to these qualities of achievement, he joins, at least relatively, a mind governed rather by reason than emotion, and a deliberate and logical adaptation of means to ends.

There is equal harmony on the other side. Here, the whole nature corresponds to the rounded outlines and softer muscles of the physical frame. There is the same universal fitness to a pur-

pose, but a widely different one. The susceptibilities that unfit the typical woman for rude conflict are joined to high and priceless qualities, without which life would be a curse. Not that men are incapable of equal moral elevation. In this respect we believe that men and women stand, in different attitudes, on about the same level. Nor, because, under the inspiration of passion, men have drawn ideal portraits of women in prose and verse, does it follow that women are superior to the other sex. Women have admired men as much as men have admired women; but their admiration has not found the same expression, by reason of that principle of universal nature which makes the man the wooer, and not the woman. The ideal woman is a very noble creature, and so is the ideal man; and this is not the less true because the ideal is not often realized in either case.

It has been pretended that the distinctive mental qualities of women are inherited from ages of oppression. Never was there a shallower fallacy. Whatever qualities of a woman are transmissible by inheritance, may descend to all her offspring alike. The male infant would be as apt to receive them as the female. The mental qualities of the latter are no more results of hereditary oppression than her bodily qualities. The supreme law of sex has decreed that the boys shall be boys and that the girls shall be girls. The natures of the two sexes are like the two electricities of the magnet. Each needs the other, and is drawn to the other; and as each is emphatically masculine or emphatically feminine, so is the strength of this mutual need.

The reciprocity between the two separate halves of human nature extends over a wide field, not only in passions and emotions, but in the regions of moral and intellectual life. Most intelligent men have felt the stimulus and refreshment of the faculties that spring from the companionship of an intelligent and congenial woman, and which is unlike anything resulting from the contact of a male mind. It is a fructifying power, with which neither the world of thought nor the world of action could well dispense. Many men of the higher sort recall as an epoch in their lives that wonderful awakening of energies, ambitions, and aspirations which comes with the first consciousness of the influence of the other sex. Sometimes the change amounts to revolution in character, and the young man can hardly recognize himself in the boy of two or three years before. The influence that begins the awakening is powerful to maintain it. Hunger, thirst, the instinct of self-preservation, ava-

rice, malice, envy, and other of the lower motive forces, are self-sustaining. But, excepting those that belong to the province of religion, the nobler desires and energies draw impulse and aliment from the principle of sex. Truth itself would seem hardly worth the pursuit if women were not in the world.

This principle of sexual reciprocity, reigning through all organized nature, except its lowest forms, widening and strengthening as the scale of being rises, and culminating at last in man, more intense and more comprehensive in him as he is more highly and variously endowed than the creatures beneath him—this principle is the most pervading among the forces of human life. Its degrees of power over individuals are almost infinitely various, but the whole race is more or less in subjection to it, or to the influences that rise out of it. Other forces may outrival it in different persons at different times, but none of them has the same character of universality, and none is so prolific in results of all kinds, for evil and for good. It is the spring of the chief pleasures and the chief pains of life. It fires the noblest ambitions, and, misplaced or abused, becomes the source of unspeakable degradation.

What we are to observe is, that this imperial and all-essential power is founded not on resemblances but on differences of nature and function. These differences are so great that it may be doubted if men and women can ever quite understand each other. Women have a nice perception of male psychology in certain phases of life and character ; but there are regions of masculine nature in which their perception is exceedingly faint and dim, because there is nothing that answers to them in their own consciousness ; and no doubt the same holds good of men in their comprehension of women. It is true that the differences between the sexes are not uniform in degree. There are masculine women and feminine men. But when the two thus resemble each other, it is, for the most part, rather through defects than positive qualities. A woman is called masculine oftener because she lacks womanliness than because she possesses manliness ; and a man is called feminine oftener because he lacks manliness than because he possesses womanliness. There are men who, through defects of nature, are indifferent to the society of women ; and there are women equally so to the society of men. But the ocean rolls and surges, though in lazy nooks and quiet bays the waters lie unruffled, unconscious and incredulous of the turmoil without.

It has been said that the question of the rights and employment

of women should be treated without regard to sex. Mr. Wendell Phillips tells us that all those who so treat it are "high-minded," and all the others "low-minded." It should rather be said that those who consider it regardless of sex do not consider it at all. It will not do to exclude from the problem the chief factor in it, and deal with women only as if they were smaller and weaker men. Yet these have been the tactics of the agitators for female suffrage, and to them they mainly owe what little success they have had. Hence their extreme sensitiveness whenever the subject is approached on its most essential side. If it could be treated like other subjects, and discussed fully and freely, the cause of the self-styled reformers would have been hopeless from the first. It is happy for them that the relations of women to society can not be so discussed without giving just offense. Their most important considerations can be touched but slightly; and even then offense will be taken. It is only for us to see that it be not taken reasonably.

The immense disadvantages under which women are placed; the cruel hardship and injustice to which many of them are often subjected; the terrible and crushing penalties, sometimes grievously disproportioned to the real fault, to which they are liable; the misery and degradation of a numerous class, resulting in many cases more from circumstance than from intrinsic viciousness—all these taken together form the most perplexing and painful problem in human life. A remedy is looked for in a change of public opinion which shall visit the breach of chastity with equal condemnation in men and women. This remedy has long been urged, and probably at this moment there is in the world at large as little disposition to accept it as ever. There is nothing in the case of men in the slightest degree answering to these penalties imposed on women, except the contempt and disgrace with which every spirited people visits a display of cowardice. Fear, or the yielding to it, is great shame in a man, and none at all in a woman. But the cases are not parallel, for a man can retrieve lost honor, and a woman can not. Whence arise the different values attached to the same virtue in men and women, and why has every attempt to make them equal signally failed? The difference is due to the structure of civilized society, which, on both its political and its social side, is built on the family. Women, and not men, are of necessity the guardians of the integrity of the family and the truth of succession, with all the interests of affection, of maintenance, and of inheritance involved in them.

Hence the virtue in question is far more important in them than in men. Some savage or barbarous peoples have evaded the difficulty by refusing to recognize the father at all in the question of kinship. When the whole system of lineage is traced through the woman alone, the reason for imposing special penalties upon her ceases, for her children must always be legitimate. This remedy, which exempts the father from any obligation to support his children if he does not choose to do so, can belong only to a low state of barbarism, though a practical adoption of it has lately been proposed, professedly in the interest of women. Nations less barbarous have tried to secure the object by constant watching and restriction, sometimes amounting to actual slavery. European civilization uses better and more effective means. It establishes a standard of honor, and trusts women to conform to it. In this they are generally aided by more delicate sensibilities, by passivity of temperament, and by being protected from the countless temptations that beset every man who mingles much with the world. Nor to him is the temptation from within less than those from without. To impose the same penalties on him that are imposed on a woman would not only be without the same necessity, but would be a far greater hardship.

Whatever liberty the best civilization may accord to women, they must always be subject to restrictions unknown to the other sex, and they can never dispense with the protecting influences which society throws about them. A man, in lonely places, has nothing to lose but life and property ; and he has nerve and muscles to defend them. He is free to go whither he pleases, and run what risks he pleases. Without a radical change in human nature, of which the world has never given the faintest sign, women can not be equally emancipated. It is not a question of custom, habit, or public opinion ; but of an all-pervading force, always formidable in the vast number of men in whom it is not controlled by higher forces. A woman is subject, also, to many other restrictions, more or less stringent, necessary to the maintenance of self-respect and the respect of others, and yet placing her at a disadvantage, as compared to men, in the active work of the world. All this is mere truism, but the plainest truism may be ignored in the interest of a theory or a "cause."

Again, everybody knows that the physical and mental constitution of woman is more delicate than in the other sex ; and, we may add, the relations between mind and body more intimate and sub-

tile. It is true that they are abundantly so in men ; but their harder organism is neither so sensitive to disturbing influences nor subject to so many of them.

It is these and other inherent conditions, joined to the engrossing nature of a woman's special functions, that have determined through all time her relative position. What we have just said—and we might have said much more—is meant as a reminder that her greatest limitations are not of human origin. Men did not make them, and they can not unmake them. Through them, God and Nature have ordained that those subject to them shall not be forced to join in the harsh conflicts of the world militant. It is folly to ignore them, or try to counteract them by political and social quackery. They set at naught legislatures and peoples.

Notwithstanding limitations on one side and comparative freedom on the other, it would not be safe to say that the allotment of happiness to the two sexes is unequal. The life of men, like that of women, has its own hardships—the deadly strain of fierce competition, exhaustion without possibility of rest, heavy responsibilities, agonies of suspense and ruin. Aside from the low state of health of women in some civilized countries, and in America above all, it is likely that, on the whole, they have about the same share as men in the enjoyment of life. It is among those who have no part in the occupations and duties of the rest of their sex that one is most apt to find that morbid introversion, those restless cravings, that vague but torturing sense of destinies unfulfilled, and activities without an object, which rarely receive much pity, but perhaps deserve it as much as any of the more positive woes. There is no misery like the misery of vacuum. But among all the causes of female unhappiness, and involving and aggravating all the rest, there is none more fruitful of tribulation than ill health, which, in American women, brings with it disabilities equal, probably, to all the rest together. If our women are to rise to the height of their capacities, the first and indispensable requisite is physical regeneration.

It is the interest of men in general that women should reach their best development, just as is it the interest of individual men that those with whom they associate should be refined, instructed, intelligent, and high-minded. The question is only of means.

There is a universal law of growth and achievement. The man who knows himself, understands his own powers and aptitudes, forms purposes in accord with them, and pursues these purposes

steadily, is the man of success. He who takes no account of his own nature, makes his will the father of his thought, shuts his eyes to unwelcome truths, places himself in false positions, and turns from the good within his reach to strain after the unattainable, is predestined to vexation and failure. Every one has his place in the world, and the wise and fortunate find it. As it is with men, so, in a measure, it is with women ; and as it is with men and women as individuals, so it is with men as a whole, and women as a whole. One must make Nature an ally and not an enemy, for the strife is unequal. The palm will not grow in the soil and climate of the pine.

Most metaphors express more or less than the truth ; and so does this. Between the life for which men alone are fit and that for which women alone are fit there lies a region where both may prosper. They may pursue the same objects, though seldom in precisely the same way, or with exactly the same results. In some employments women, with equal application and persistency, would certainly have an advantage. We do not mean to consider the relative intellectual power of the sexes. It is enough for our purpose to remember that the faculties of the two are exercised under different physical and moral conditions, which modify their action.

It is often and most justly said that the intellectual growth of the country bears no proportion to its material progress. The drift toward pursuits called practical is so strong that it carries with it nearly all the best male talent. The rush and whirl of business catches the men as in a maelstrom, and, if it sharpens and invigorates some of their powers, it dwarfs others, and narrows the mental horizon. Women are free from these disadvantages. Many of them have abundant leisure and opportunities of culture better than the best within the reach of men on this continent forty years ago. Their sex is itself a power if they use it rightly. They can, if they will, create and maintain higher standards of thought and purpose, raise the whole tone of national life, and give our civilization the fullness that it lacks ; for, if they raise themselves, they will infallibly raise the men with them. But they will not do it by frothy declamation on platforms, or flooding the bookstalls with sensation stories, any more than by those other trivialities which professional female reformers denounce. Nor will they do it by trying to forget that they are women.

There is a strange want of dignity in the attitude of some of these reformers toward the question of the relations of their sex to

society. Instead of claiming for them what is theirs, a nature of their own, with laws of its own, and a high capacity of independent development, they propose, as the aim of their ambition, the imitation of men. The position in which they try to place women may be said to answer to that of a colony to its metropolis ; a provincialism which can not disappear till the colony learns the nature of its own worth, and accepts the conditions of its own vitality. Till then, its attitude is a continual admission of inferiority.

There is no country in which women enjoy such large and various liberty as with us ; but it would be bold to say that American women, as a whole, are superior to those of other leading nations. In spite of their advantages, a vast proportion of them fall immeasurably short of the influence and consideration that ought to belong to them. We would by no means be understood to intimate that this is a consequence of liberty. It proceeds from a variety of causes, some of which act injuriously on men also ; and foremost among them is an overstrained and morbid activity, an incessant tension of nerves, bred partly by climate, but incomparably more by the peculiar social conditions of a country where all kinds of competition, spurred by all kinds of stimulus, keep mind and body always on the stretch. The men feel them in the struggles of active life ; the women in the ambitions, anxieties, and worries of a social existence, where emulation prevails from the highest to the lowest. And they, as the more susceptible and more easily deranged, suffer more than the men.

To reach the best results there must be a harmony and balance between body and mind, which can only come by giving its due exercise to each. In an athlete, who devotes his life to nothing but athletics, the muscles and sinews thrive at the expense of the mental faculties ; but, in a man or woman whose brain is overwrought, whether by important matters or by trifles, the body suffers without profit to the mind ; for the abused physical nature quickly reacts on the mental, and both are impaired together. Worn as so many of our women are by this morbid action and reaction of body and mind, it is impossible for them to reach that full womanhood than which the world has nothing more beneficent or more noble.

In this condition of things, what do certain women demand for the good of their sex ? To add to the excitements that are wasting them other and greater excitements, and to cares too much for their strength other and greater cares. Because they can not do their own work, to require them to add to it the work of men, and

launch them into the turmoil where the most robust sometimes fail. It is much as if a man in a state of nervous exhaustion were told by his physician to enter at once for a foot-race or a boxing-match.

This brings us to our object, the consideration of the movement for female suffrage. It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden. This pretense of the female suffragists was reduced to an absurdity when some of them gravely affirmed that, if a single woman wanted to vote, all the others ought to be required to do so.

Government by doctrines of abstract right, of which the French Revolution set the example and bore the fruits, involves enormous danger and injustice. No political right is absolute and of universal application. Each has its conditions, qualifications, and limitations. If these are disregarded, one right collides with another, or with many others. Even a man's right to liberty is subject to the condition that he does not use it to infringe the rights of his neighbors. It is in the concrete, and not in the abstract, that rights prevail in every sound and wholesome society. They are applied where they are applicable. A government of glittering generalities quickly destroys itself. The object of government is the accomplishment of a certain result, the greatest good of the governed ; and the ways of reaching it vary in different countries and different social conditions. Neither liberty nor the suffrage are the end ; they are nothing but means to reach it ; and each should be used to the extent in which it is best adapted to its purpose. If the voting of women conduces to the greatest good of the community, then they ought to vote, and otherwise they ought not. The question of female suffrage thus becomes a practical question, and not one of declamation.

High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, *in esse* or *in posse*, actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

It is said, and incessantly repeated, that the influence of women has kept even pace with the growth of civilization. As respects direct political influence, this is certainly untrue. In former times,

and under low social conditions, women have occasionally had a degree of power in public affairs unknown in the foremost nations of the modern world. The most savage tribe on this continent listened, in solemn assembly, to the counsels of its matrons, with a deference that has no parallel among its civilized successors. The people of ancient Lycia, at a time when they were semi-barbarians, gave such power to their women that they were reported to live under a gynecocracy, or female government. The word gynecocracy, by the way, belongs to antiquity. It has no application in modern life ; and, in the past, its applications were found, not in the higher developments of ancient society, but in the lower. In the splendid civilization of Athens, women held a very subordinate place. In the France of two centuries and more ago, they had a share of political power greater than at any time since, though France had not then mounted to her full height.

A certain benign influence, indefinite and almost mystical in character, has been ascribed to "woman," which, it is proclaimed, will purify our politics. That, in some relations of life, the instincts of women are preëminently delicate and true ; that in them the moral nature and the better emotions are more apt to rule than in the other sex ; that their conscience is more sensitive, and their religious susceptibilities quicker and more controlling—is, happily, not to be denied ; but they are no whit less human than men. Like them, they have "the defects of their qualities," and the very delicacy and impressibility of their mental and moral structure give efficacy to these defects. There are circumstances under which they rarely appear to advantage, or avail much for good.

There are some means of judging from experience whether they are likely to exert, in public life, the beneficent power ascribed to them. Many countries of Europe have been governed by queens, and this at a time when to wear a crown meant to hold a dominant power. According to the theory, these female reigns ought to have shown more virtuous and benign government than is generally found under the rule of men. The facts do not answer to the expectation. Isabella of Castile was full of amiable qualities, but she permitted herself to be made the instrument of diabolical religious persecution. Catharine II. of Russia was one of the ablest women who ever held a scepter, and one of the most profligate. Maria Theresa of Austria was in many respects far above the common level ; but she was a sharer in what has been called the greatest of political crimes—the partition of Poland. That outrage

was the work of three accomplices, two women and a man—the Empress of Russia, the Archduchess of Austria, and the King of Prussia. The reign of Henry IV. of France was one of the most beneficent in history. His first queen was a profligate and his second a virago, gravely suspected of having procured his assassination in collusion with her lover. The last wife of Louis XIV. was discreet and devout, but she favored the dragonnades, and called her brother to share the spoils of those atrocious persecutions. A throng of matchless statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, and poets made the reign of Elizabeth of England brilliant and great. It was adorned by the high and courageous spirit of the Queen, and sullied by her meanness, jealousy, and inordinate vanity. Mary of England lives in the memory of her bloody persecutions. Mary of Scotland was the thorn of her kingdom. Her fascinations have outlived three centuries, and so have her tumults of unbridled love and the dark suspicion of crime that rests upon her. The queen-mother of Charles IX. of France fomented, if she did not cause, the frightful massacre of St. Bartholomew, and surrounded herself with a band of beautiful and unscrupulous girls, whose charms she used systematically as means of political influence. There have been many bad kings, many indifferent ones, and a few who have earned the gratitude of all time. Many women have worn crowns, but we look among them in vain for one of those royal benefactors of the race. Not that women have less power for good than men. In some circumstances they have more. Their desire of good is often intense ; but this desire has not been best fulfilled in the field of politics.

Besides queens, women in less eminent stations have sometimes had great political influence. This was never more true than in France at the middle of the seventeenth century, when the wives and daughters of the high nobility played a remarkable part in the politics of the day. The sagacious and able De Retz, who lived in the midst of these events, and took an important part in them, had unrivaled opportunities of studying women in their political character. His judgment is that they were very adroit in managing the strings of a party intrigue, but failed on great questions of policy. Two other points are prominent at this time : First, the action of these political ladies always had a personal bearing, and turned about some man or men from motives of love, predilection, jealousy, or schemes of alliance ; secondly, with a few exceptions, they used their own charms, or those of other women, as means of

gaining political advantages, and this without scruple, and sometimes without shame. Instead of purifying politics, they corrupted them.

Finally—and this instance, if it yields an argument to only half the country, yields it to the half that alone has need of it—the women of the South were more ardent for secession and slavery than the men; and, when the men knew that the cause was lost, their weaker partners refused to yield. Fighting was useless; but fair lips still cried, “Fight on!” It was the action of those two very different qualities—a woman’s will and a man’s resolution. The one can be argued with, and the other can not. The one is subject to reason; the other sees nothing but the object on which its heart is set, and strains after it in the teeth of ruin. Not that one does not continually meet women entirely reasonable in their aims, and in their pursuit of them; but this intractable element of “a woman’s will” will have to be accounted with whenever the sex enters the lists of active politics.

Shakespeare gives a superb illustration of these two qualities, or rather of one of them. An intense desire possesses Lady Macbeth, and masters her whole being. A crown glitters before her eyes, and, as she gazes on it, fear, conscience, loyalty, the sacred law of hospitality, are all forgotten. The vehemence of her longing bears her on like a fate. Her husband hesitates, divided between duty and ambition. She taunts him with fear, and his admirable answer—

“I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none”—

is wholly lost upon her. He yields; the deed is done, and the prize seized. Then come the avenging furies. She pines and dies under the tortures of the mind, while the sterner nature lives on, to perish at last by the sword, fighting with fierce desperation against the retributive doom.

This impetuous property of feminine nature, no doubt, may have its use at times. When a people is afflicted by some overwhelming evil, to be thrown off at any risk or sacrifice, then a one-sided vehemence of attack is not out of place. Such modes of attack are not confined to women. Ardent philanthropic reformers have commonly shown feminine characteristics, and assumed corresponding attitudes toward the objects of their zeal. But, useful as men of this stamp are in exceptional emergencies of a certain kind, the

habitual reformer is generally a nuisance when he tries to deal with the broad and many-sided questions involved in the government of nations. These demand qualities widely different from his; and, as the foundation of them all, the essentially masculine one of justice.

One of the chief dangers of popular government is that of inconsiderate and rash legislation. In impatience to be rid of one evil, ulterior consequences are apt to be forgotten. In the haste to redress one wrong, a door may be opened to many. This danger would be increased immeasurably if the most impulsive and excitable half of humanity had an equal voice in the making of laws. And, in the administration of them, abstract right would then be made to prevail after a fashion somewhat startling. A lady of intelligence and admirable intentions, an ardent partisan on principles of pure humanitarianism, confessed that, in the last Presidential election, Florida had given a majority for the Democrats; but insisted that it was right to count it for Hayes, because other States had been counted wrongfully for Tilden. It was impossible to make her comprehend that government conducted on such principles would end in anarchy. In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

But it is not their virtues that we should see in the dust and scramble of the political arena. As, when white sand is mingled with black, the black is drawn to the magnet and the white is left behind, so the coarse and contentious among women would be drawn to politics by a sort of elective affinity. Those of finer sensibilities and more delicate scruples would remain in more congenial climates, and the law of natural selection would rule in all its force. The great majority of the sex would employ themselves in the duties which must be discharged so long as the world goes on, and distract themselves as little as might be with primary meetings, canvasses, conventions, and election campaigns. It has been said, and too truly, that the best men shun politics. Their endless complication, the innumerable wires that guide their machinery, and the dexterity required to work it, give to the practiced trickster who has made them his trade an advantage over far abler men who have not. The system of spoils draws hungry and rapacious crowds to choke incessantly the highways and by-ways of the public service, and the brevity and uncertainty of the tenure of office make it certain that those most fit for it will least care to accept it. If these and other causes have deterred the best men from taking

part in active politics, they would deter the best women far more. All that is repulsive to the one would be incomparably more so to the other. If politics are to be purified by artfulness, effrontery, insensibility, a pushing self-assertion, and a glib tongue, then we may look for regeneration ; for the typical female politician will be richly endowed with all these gifts.

Thus accoutered for the conflict, he may fairly hope to have the better of her masculine antagonist. A woman has the inalienable right of attacking without being attacked in turn. She may strike but must not be struck, either literally or figuratively. Most women refrain from abusing their privilege of non-combatants ; but there are those in whom the sense of impunity breeds the cowardly courage of the virago, and makes the tongue more terrible than the sword. A man's tongue is strong only as the organ of reason or eloquence ; but a woman's is a power in itself. During some angry party debate, the future House of Representatives will present an animated scene when, in or out of order, the female members take the floor.

In reckoning the resources of the female politicians, there is one which can by no means be left out. None know better than women the potency of feminine charms aided by feminine arts. The woman "inside politics" will not fail to make use of an influence so subtle and strong, and of which the management is peculiarly suited to her talents. If—and the contingency is in the highest degree probable—she is not gifted with charms of her own, she will have no difficulty in finding and using others of her sex who are. If report is to be trusted, Delilah has already spread her snares for the Congressional Samson ; and the power before which the wise fail and the mighty fall has been invoked against the sages and heroes of the Capitol. When "woman" is fairly "inside politics," the sensation press will reap a harvest of scandals more lucrative to itself than profitable to public morals. And, as the zeal of one class of female reformers has been, and no doubt will be, largely directed to their grievances in matters of sex, we shall have shrill-tongued discussions of subjects which had far better be let alone.

It may be said that the advocates of female suffrage do not look to political women for the purifying of politics, but to the votes of the sex at large. The two, however, can not be separated. It should be remembered that the question is not of a limited and select female suffrage, but of a universal one. To limit would be impossible. It would seek the broadest areas and the lowest depths, and spread itself through the marshes and malarious pools of soci-

ety. Those instincts that dart to their goal while the reason of man gropes and wanders ; that love of the good and the beautiful which is to soothe the raging waters, and guide their currents in ways of peace and right—these belong to the chosen of their sex alone ; and, even in them, it may be doubted whether they would find profitable exercise in American politics. Faith is indispensable to all achievement ; but it must not quarrel with common sense, nor walk with eyes shut. If it does, it will lead not to success, but to disaster. Now, the most ardent faith, if joined with common sense and the faintest knowledge of human nature, will fail to discern in the great mass of the female sex any promise of purer and wiser government. Women, as a whole, have less sense of political responsibility than men. For this there are various reasons, but one will suffice. They have shared very imperfectly in the traditions, and not at all in the practice of self-government. The men of free countries have been trained to a sense of political responsibility by long striving for political rights, the memory of which has acted as a continual education, special to one sex because the other has had neither the will nor the opportunity to share it. By slow progress in the acquisition of these rights, they have acquired a consciousness of their value, some knowledge of the conditions on which they rest, and the skill to use them. In the freest countries, and our own among the rest, there are large numbers of men who have not received this training, have never learned the art of self-government, and can not share in it without injury and danger to the state. Women as a whole may be said to be in the condition of persons devoid of this training, and of the sense of political responsibility that grows out of it, excepting a minority composed of the more thoughtful, who have acquired it by education, conscientiousness, and association with the better sort of men. But the vast majority have little or none of it ; and hence, if they are to be admitted at all to a share in public affairs, they should be admitted very gradually. We say nothing here of those differences of nature that have hitherto in all ages, countries, and races, made men the governing half of the race. What we urge is, that now and for generations to come, woman as a whole must of necessity come into politics far less prepared for them than men as a whole. Large masses now vote who are unprepared to vote. The unprepared women are incomparably more numerous, and in many of them the want of preparation is complete and absolute. This is the condition of nearly all those in the lower strata of society. We shall of

course be told that they must go into the water before they can learn to swim ; but what is proposed is not to teach them to swim : it is to throw them all at once into a fathomless ocean, where they will drown themselves, and pull down those who were swimming there, or trying to swim before them.

A French statesman once said that, against a mob of women, the Government is entirely helpless. There are no means of repression. Bullets, bayonets, sabers, and grapeshot are out of the question. And yet, in the French Revolution, female mobs were fiercer and more destructive than those of men. To give women the suffrage is to expose the most excitable part of the human race to the influence of political passions with no means of defense against possible consequences. A body of legislators coerced by a female mob would be in a position as pitiable as ridiculous. There are those who think that the suffrage would act as a safety-valve to political passions ; but it has not so acted in the case of men. Dissatisfied masses, foiled of their purpose at the polls, are more apt to resort to force than if they had not already tried lawful means without success. The bloody riots of 1877 were the work of men in full enjoyment of the suffrage. It is to the dread of lead and steel that the friends of order must look in the last resort ; and, when this does not exist, political frenzy will have its way.

If the better class of women flatter themselves that they can control the others, they are doomed to disappointment. They will be outvoted in their own kitchens, without reckoning the agglomerations of poverty, ineptitude, and vice that form a startling proportion of our city populations. It is here that the male vote alone threatens our system with its darkest perils. The female vote would enormously increase the evil, for it is often more numerous, always more impulsive, and less subject to reason ; and, through causes which we gave above, almost devoid of the sense of responsibility. Here the bad politician would find his richest resources. He could not reach the better class of female voters, but the rest would be ready to his hand. Many women will sell themselves ; many more would sell their votes. Three fourths of them, when not urged by some pressing need or contagious passion, would be moved, not by principles, but by personal predilections. These, even with the best of their sex, do not always lean to the soundest and most stable wisdom, either for public or private life. We deprecate any interpretation of disrespect. We have known a gracious and noble example of cultured womanhood who could by no means

be persuaded that one of the worst of our politicians, reputed also one of the most agreeable, was not all that he appeared ; and who would infallibly have given him her vote, if she had had one to give. The female cohorts of crowded cities would espouse the cause of their favorites with a vehemence unknown to men ; but it would be fatuity to believe that they would choose them in the interest of good government. We say nothing of the outcasts of society ; though they, too, would have their watchword and their chief.

The evils of universal female, as of universal male suffrage, would be greatest in dense industrial populations. In the country, they would be less felt, and least of all in the rough and simple life of the thinly-settled borders, or the far West. Like other political evils, they would reach their climax in great cities. The government of these is difficult enough already. To make it impossible would be madness.

If it is urged that tax-paying women ought to vote in virtue of their tax-paying, it should be remembered that men have no such right. With us, the beggar and the millionaire vote alike. No political power is granted to the rich that is not granted to the poor ; or, in other words, property is not acknowledged as a basis of representation. It is taxed, not because it confers a franchise, but because the Government protects or is presumed to protect it. The same measure of protection is given to the property of a woman as to that of a man. If female tax-payers were allowed to vote, one of two things would happen : a principle of government which was repudiated in the interest of democracy would be restored in the interest of wealth ; or else all women, rich or poor, would receive the franchise together. The first alternative is hardly possible ; under the second, the female property-holder would have her own vote to defend her property along with several needy female votes to imperil it ; for the poor women outnumber the rich.

Those who wish the Roman Catholic Church to subvert our school system, control legislation, and become a mighty political force, can not do better than labor day and night for female suffrage. This, it is true, is opposed to every principle and tradition of that great Church, which, nevertheless, would reap from it immense benefits. The priests have little influence over a considerable part of their male flock ; but their power is great over the women, who would repair to the polls at the word of command with edifying docility and zeal.

The right of voting and the duty of fighting should never be divorced. Women, though non-combatant, are abundantly combative when excited. It is conceivable that they might discover a *casus belli* when the men could not see it ; and, with or without the help of sympathizing male zealots, might vote in majority that the men should fight. This they would probably refuse to do against their wishes and convictions, and the women, with law clearly on their side, could not help themselves. Law with no power to enforce it is futile and sometimes ridiculous. The above contingency is not likely to occur ; but that it is simply possible shows the false position of a government subject to female suffrage.

Neither Congress, nor the States, nor the united voice of the whole people could permanently change the essential relations of the sexes. Universal female suffrage, even if decreed, would undo itself in time ; but the attempt to establish it would work deplorable mischief. The question is, whether the persistency of a few agitators shall plunge us blindfold into the most reckless of all experiments ; whether we shall adopt this supreme device for developing the defects of women, and demolish their real power to build an ugly mockery instead. For the sake of womanhood, let us hope not. In spite of the effect on the popular mind of the incessant repetition of a few trite fallacies, and in spite of the squeamishness that prevents the vast majority averse to the movement from uttering a word against it, let us trust that the good sense of the American people will vindicate itself against this most unnatural and pestilent revolution. In the full and normal development of womanhood lie the best interests of the world. Let us labor earnestly for it, and, that we may not labor in vain, let us save women from the barren perturbations of American politics. Let us respect them, and, that we may do so, let us pray for deliverance from female suffrage.

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